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REMARKS BY CHIEF-JUSTICE DALY,

President of the Society.

Mr. Whitehouse's paper is a valuable one upon an exceedingly interesting subject. It shows that he has made a careful study of the locality where the indications, if any now exist, of the great artificial lake described by Herodotus, Diodorus Siculus and Pliny, ought to be found; and the geographical features stated by him are set forth with such detail and minuteness, that I assume them to be accurate and reliable. This lake, as Herodotus describes it, was of such magnitude, and showed such an advance in the knowledge of engineering, that perhaps we ought not to be surprised that Herodotus's account of it should heretofore have been questioned, although describing, not what he heard, but what he saw himself.

Until a comparatively recent period, this and many other statements by the "Father of History" have been treated as doubtful or incredible; but the investigations of the last half century, instead of confirming these doubts, have resulted in the discovery of facts that show him to have been one of the most careful and reliable of narrators; one who, as Mr. Whitehouse has observed, always distinguishes between what he saw, what he heard and what he believed.

His account of Lake Moeris is so circumstantial and particular, that Mr. Whitehouse started, in his investigation, very properly, in my judgment, upon the assumption that his statement was true; and made it the primary object of

his examination, to ascertain whether there was anything in the geographical features of the country that rendered the existence of an artificial lake, of such magnitude, questionable or impossible.

This was a more correct course than that pursued by the previous investigators, Messrs. Linant and Jomard, who, having found depressions and a configuration of the surface sufficient to create a lake, fixed upon what they found as the true site of this artificial basin, without troubling themselves whether it would or would not meet the requirements which the description of Herodotus demands.

It is manifest that neither of the specific localities fixed upon by them as the bed and boundaries of this ancient basin will satisfy the required conditions; while the important fact ascertained by Mr. Whitehouse, of a large depression at the south, will substantially do so, upon the facts which he presents, assuming them, as I do, to be accurate. Mr. Whitehouse, moreover, included in the examination of this question, what was very essential, an examination of all the cartographical evidence, from the time of Ptolemy; and what is of especial value in his paper is his calling our attention to the errors that abound in the modern and comparatively recent maps of this part of Egypt, upon which reliance would naturally be placed—errors so numerous, that they may, as he expresses it, be grouped together in families.

Mr. Whitehouse's labors add another to the many proofs that have recently accumulated of the truthfulness and accuracy of Herodotus; and the existence of such a stupendous work as the one described by him, shows that, in our estimate of what the Egyptians could and did do, it is

not in exaggerating that we are likely to err, but in not sufficiently appreciating what they were able to accomplish.

I feel that the Society is much indebted to Mr. Whitehouse for this interesting paper, and I trust that the condition of things in Egypt will, ere long, be such as to bring about a survey of this neglected region, not merely to gratify curiosity in respect to its past condition, but to point out the means of guarding against results from the action of the Nile, which at no very distant day may prove to be, in this part of Egypt, most calamitous.

A P P E N D I X.

[The following descriptions of Lake Moeris are taken, without change, from the standard translations of the respective authors.]

PLINY, A. D. 47.—Between Arsinoëtes and Memphites, a lake 250 miles, or according to what Mucianus says, 450 miles in circumference and 50 paces deep, has been formed by artificial means: after the King by whose orders it was made, it was called by the name of Moeris. The distance from thence to Memphis is nearly 62 miles, a place which was formerly the citadel of the Kings of Egypt. Memphis is 15 miles from the spot where the river Nile divides into the different channels which we have mentioned as forming the Delta.—Pliny's “Natural History,” Book V., c. 9., Vol. I., p. 409.

(And there are) two (pyramids) in the place where Lake Moeris was excavated, an immense artificial piece of water, cited by the Egyptians among their wondrous and memorable works: the summits of the pyramids, it is said, are to be seen above the water.—Book XXXVI., c. 16, Vol. VI., p. 336.

HERODOTUS, Book II. (RAWLINSON'S TRANSLATION), B. C. 454.—“The Egyptians told me that the first man who ruled over Egypt was Mén, and that in his time all Egypt, except the Thebaic canton, was a marsh, none of the land below Lake Moeris then showing itself above the surface of the water. This is a distance of seven days' sail from the sea up the river.—Chap. 4.

“The crocodile is esteemed sacred by some of the Egyptians, by others he is treated as an enemy. Those who live near Thebes, and those who dwell around Lake Moeris, regard them with especial veneration. In each of these places they keep one crocodile in particular, who is taught to be tame and tractable.—Chap. 69.

“The priests said that Mén was the first King of Egypt, and that it was he who raised the dyke which protects Memphis from the inundations of the